

reconsidered because of Port growth and vessel safety in the area. The major emphasis of the Limited Re-evaluation Report is the economic justification of the project. The EA will also identify existing resources within the area, assess impacts (if any) and determine necessary mitigation. The impacts on resources along Seddon Island have been considered as part of the evaluation process. An engineering evaluation of the new turning basin has determined the slopes and footprint of the new design. Based on this, we do not feel the shoreline would be affected. Water quality impacts of this channel would not change from the widening. A site investigation by the Corps and field survey of the project area by the US Fish and Wildlife Service revealed no seagrasses in the area. A literature search of the NEP seagrass maps and water quality indicates that the water quality in the area is relatively degraded so that seagrass would not grow there.

#### **5.5 NMFS.**

The National Marine Fisheries Service responded by letter dated June 3, 1998. They expressed concerns for the mangroves and oyster beds along the shoreline in the project area. They recommended that USFWS consider the affects of the projects on these resources and that the sediments be sampled to determine suitable disposal sites. RESPONSE: The mangroves would be avoided but the oyster beds would be impacted. The design calls for the relocation of the beds to adjacent areas where other oyster beds are present. The material dredged material has been sampled and the use of this material in upland placement or in the Garrison Channel would not violate State water quality standards. The USFWS considered these effects in the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report (see Appendix II).

#### **5.6 Tampa Pilots.**

The Tampa Bay Pilots responded by letter dated June 17, 1998. They stated that the project would provide increased navigation safety.

#### **5.7 State Clearinghouse Coordination.**

The Florida Department of Community Affairs responded by letter dated June 19, 1998. They requested an additional 7 days to make a consistency determination.

#### **5.8 State Clearinghouse Coordination.**

The Florida Department of Community Affairs responded by letter dated July 17, 1998. The Department requested that impacts to manatees be considered and stated a permit from DEP was necessary and that consistency with the Coastal Zone Management Program be considered. It also recommended that a magnetometer survey of the project area be conducted to determine if underwater cultural resources are located in the area. The Department has also determined that at this stage the project is consistent with the CZMP.

RESPONSE: Impacts on federally threatened and endangered species are addressed in formal consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service involving any federal action. The Project will be evaluated in accordance with the Florida Coastal Zone Management Program. A determination will be forwarded to the State Clearinghouse during the review of the draft Environmental Assessment prepared for the project. A magnetometer survey has been conducted and the results are being coordinated with the State.

## **5.9 Field Meeting.**

A field meeting and site visit was conducted on 9 December 1998 to consider alternatives for dredged material placement.

Representatives of the Corps, US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Tampa Port Authority, Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission and the Florida Department Environmental Protection were in attendance. Alternatives discussed included creation of inter-tidal wetlands adjacent to CMDA-2D, Island creation south of Davis Island airport, marsh creation along Davis Island, Palm River Restoration, Hookers Point fill and Garrison Channel.

## **5.10 Scoping Letter #2.**

Based on this meeting, a second scoping letter dated December 29, 1998 was sent asking for comments concerning the use of Garrison Channel as a Beneficial Use of Dredged Material placement site.

## **5.11 Clearinghouse Coordination.**

The State Clearinghouse responded stating they would be coordinating the response to the project (SAI# FL9812310800C).

## **5.12 Hillsborough County EPC.**

The Hillsborough County Environmental Commission responded by letter dated January 25, 1999. The Commission stated it had no objection to the use of Garrison Channel but recommended only the large grain-size be used. It stated the EPC staff may require mitigation of lost littoral shelf in the Garrison Channel. They also recommended the use of riprap along the shoreline to alleviate any erosion created by the increased ship activity. They also recommended placing any additional material in the Palm River.

RESPONSE: The lost oyster bars would be relocated as mitigation for losses on the

shelf. The creation of shallow water in the Garrison Channel should offset any losses of shelf habitat. No new traffic or erosion along this channel is anticipated, therefore, riprap has not been included in the design. At this time, the Palm River is not a viable alternative. Ongoing studies have not been completed that would make this alternative available in time. Should the Palm River become available we would consider its use.

## **5.13 NMFS.**

The National Marine Fisheries Service responded by letter dated January 27, 1999.

NMFS stated support for creating habitat and improving water quality in Garrison

Channel but stated concerns for water circulation and sediment contamination.

RESPONSE: The sediments in both the project area and the Garrison Channel have been tested. The placement of materials in

the Garrison Channel would meet water quality standards. The two main channels

control the tidal flushing of the area. The Garrison Channel is a cross canal linking the

two and during tidal fluctuations no current flows occurs. Therefore, if we change the

bottom elevation, there would be no net change in circulation patterns.

## **5.14 Clearinghouse Coordination.**

The Florida Department of Community Affairs responded by letter dated March 12,

1999. It stated concerns expressed by NMFS in their January 27, 1999, letter.

They also forwarded comments expressed by the Southwest Florida Water

Management District regarding spoil disposal. In addition, they forwarded

comments from the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC) noting that the

project was consistent with the TBRPC's Strategic Regional Policy Plan and from the

Hillsborough County regarding the proposed reuse of dredged material.

**RESPONSE:** As previously stated, these things would be considered in our evaluation.

#### **5.15 Draft Environmental Coordination.**

A draft environmental assessment was sent by letter dated November 26, 1999 to all interested parties that were identified during the scoping process.

#### **5.16 The National Marine Fisheries Service.**

The National Marine Fisheries Service responded by letter dated December 23, 1999 stating that the coordinated documents describes resources and impacts to those resources and that the project adequately mitigates for any impacts to those resources.

#### **5.17 US Environmental Protection Agency.**

The US EPA responded by letter dated January 7, 2000, stating that if the impacts to oyster beds are fully mitigated, then, they have no objections to the project.

#### **5.18 Florida Department of Community Affairs.**

The Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) acting as the State Clearinghouse responded to the coordination by letter dated January 25, 2000. The State has declared this proposal consistent with the Florida Coastal Zone Management Program. The DCA also forwarded comments on the proposal submitted to them including the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Historical Resources, the Department of Transportation, the Southwest Florida Water

management District, and the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council. **Issue:** Comments from the TBRPC and DEP expressed concerns for the reduced circulation in Ybor Channel from reduction in the Garrison Channel. **Response:** Based on discussion with our coastal engineers, the consensus was that since this is a cross channel between two tidally influence water bodies of Hillsborough Bay that the tidal flow between the two is negligible and by reducing the capacity there would be no impact. **Issue:** The Division of Historical Resources stated that a potentially significant anomaly was identified and may be affected by the proposed work. **Response:** An underwater survey was conducted by archeological divers and found to be modern-day debris. This is being coordinated with their office.

## 6. LIST OF PREPARERS.

Table 6, List of Preparers.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DISCIPLINE</u>	<u>EXPERIENCE</u>	<u>ROLE IN PREPARING EIS</u>
William J. Fonferek	Biologist	25 years environmental impacts assessment	NEPA Coordinator, Biological Impact Assessment, Endangered Species Consultation
Tim Murphy	Civil Engineer	8 years experience	Project Manager
Peter Besrutschko	Civil Engineer	5 years	HTRW Assessment
Paul Stevenson	Landscape Architect	12 years experience recreation design, construction and development	Recreation Resources Analysis and Mitigation Development
Tommy Birchett	Archeologist	20 years historic property management and assessment	Historic Property Analysis and Assessment
Glen Schuster	Environmental Engineer	21 years	Water Quality Investigations and Impact Assessment
Tracy Leeser	Civil Engineer		Study Manager

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